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DEDICATED TO HER



MOST GRACIOUS MAJESTY

The Queen.

Chromo-Lithographic Drawings,

representing an

IRISH ECCLESIASTICAL BELL,

which is supposed to have belonged to

SAINT PATRICK.

AND THE SEVERAL SIDES OF THE

Travelled Shrine.

IN WHICH IT IS PRESERVED;

Accompanied by

A Historical & Illustrative Description.

LONDON: THOMAS HODGSON, 13 PATERNOSTER ROW.

DUBLIN: HODGES & SMITH.

BELFAST: MARCUS WARD & CO.

MDCCCL.

1850

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FIVE

Chromo-Lithographic Drawings,

representing an

IRISH ECCLESIASTICAL BELL,

which is supposed to have belonged to

SAINT PATRICK.

AND THE SEVERAL SIDES OF THE

Armed Shrine

IN WHICH IT IS PRESERVED;

Accompanied by

A Historical & Illustrative Description.



BELFAST.

Printed and Published by

MARCUS WARD & CO.,

6 CORN MARKET.

MDCCL.

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To

Her Most Gracious Majesty

The Queen.

This Publication,

describing and representing an
Interesting Monument of

Irish Ecclesiastical Antiquity.

illustrated by the aid of

Irish Learning

AND ART,

is Respectfully

dedicated.

In Humble Acknowledgement of Her Majesty's

(warm affection so conspicuously)

Manifested towards

IRELAND;

By Her Majesty Most Devoted and Grateful
Subjects and Servants,

The Publishers.

Belfast, July, 1850.

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Preface.

In presenting to the public the present work the publishers had two objects in view; first, to bring under their notice one of the most ancient, curious and valuable reliques of Irish Antiquity at present in existence, by accurately drawn and coloured representations; and secondly, to produce a specimen of Irish Lithography at once tasteful, elegant, useful and instructive; and if the present work attains these objects they will consider themselves fully repaid.

They take this opportunity of returning their grateful thanks to the Messrs. McElean, for their kindness in granting them access to the Bell and its Shrine (which are the subjects of the publication) when required; to their friends by whose suggestions advice and assistance they were induced to publish this work, and more especially to the Rev^d Doctor Reeves of Ballymena, for the following admirable Descriptive Essay; without which their humble labours would have been comparatively uninteresting.

The original chalk drawings of each plate were made in stone by Mr. James Murray of this town, and the lithographed title, the tinting of the stones and printing were executed by our own artists.

Belfast, July. 1830.

ST. PATRICK'S BELL AND SHRINE.

THE ancient Irish Church being strongly impressed with the conventual character, there were few articles of ecclesiastical furniture more required, and none more prized, than the Bells wherewith her primitive communities were wont to be summoned to their frequent religious exercises. Presently, when tall steeples, "slender and round," came to be appendages of the chief religious establishments, their purpose was of a mixed nature, but their name was simple, and *Clog-teach*, or Bell-house, expressed the principal object of their erection. From the number of specimens which have been preserved, the quadrilateral oblong shape of the ancient Irish Bell is familiar to every native antiquary; but it is novel to those of foreign countries, and it is with a mingled feeling that the inmates of the building once the monastery of St. Gall, in Switzerland, exhibit to the visiter the Bell which belonged to its founder, for its tongue and tradition pronounce it to be a Bell, but experience has shown them nothing which resembles it. The unusual appearance admits, however, of a gratifying explanation, in the fact that this was the Irish pattern, and that St. Gall, the founder, was an Irishman.^a At home, there was scarcely one of our distinguished saints with whose memory the legend of his Bell was not associated: but antiquity, and the dignity of the original owner, invested with special sanctity those which were supposed to have been used by St. Patrick.^b When that saint ordained Fiech to be Bishop of the Lagenians, he is said to have committed to him, as badges of his office, a Crozier and a Bell.^c One such is said also to have been in the saint's hand when, on Cruachan-aichle, the modern Croagh Patrick, he had his last encounter with the demons of Ireland; to the violent ringing of which, accompanied by the recital of psalms, and the invocation of the sacred name, when his adversaries were unwilling to yield, he at last flung it with all his might into the thickest of their ranks, and thereby spread such consternation among them, that they all fled with precipitation into the sea, and left the island free from their spiritual aggressions for seven years, seven months, and seven days!^d This Bell was afterwards bestowed upon the patron saint of Kildare, and was called the *Bearnan Brighde*, or "The Broken-bell of Brigid," from the name of its new owner, and the injury it sustained in its fall.

Another Bell, which, in the middle ages, was held in great esteem as having belonged to the Apostle of Ireland, was that commonly called the *Finn-faidhech* of Patrick.^e It was an heir-loom of the abbacy of Armagh, and is occasionally noticed in the Irish annals, as, for example, at the year 946, where the Four Masters relate that it was employed by the episcopal abbot of Armagh to measure the tribute paid by a northern tribe to him as successor of St. Patrick:—"The full of the Finufadhiach of silver was given by the Cinel-Eoghain for the blessing of Patrick, and his successor at that time, i.e.

^a See Irish Ecclesiastical Journal, vol. v., p. 137.

^b He is said to have bestowed fifty of them upon the churches in Connaught which he founded.—*Trias Thaum.*, p. 143, *b*.

^c Book of Armagh, cited in "O'Donovan's Irish Grammar," p. 438.

^d *Vita Tripartita S. Patricii*, ii., 64.—*Trias Thaum.*, p. 138.

^e "Sanctus Maccetus de Donnach-locbain, qui reliquiarum illud famosum, *Finn-faidheach* nuncupatum fabricavit."—*Vita Tripart.*, iii., 98.—*Trias Thaum.*, p. 167.

Joseph.^f Its name signifies the "White-toned," in the same association of ideas which gave to St. Fintan's Bell the designation of *Dubh-labhair*, or "Black-sounding."^f

But the most precious reliquary of this class, and the one to which we find the most frequent allusions, was the *Clog-an-eadhachta Phatraic*, or "The Bell of Patrick's Will." At the commencement of the twelfth century it had a special keeper, and was then deemed worthy of that costly shrine which is the subject of four of the drawings in the present work: in succeeding centuries its custody was continued in the same family, and proved to them a source of considerable emolument; and, in after ages, when its profits ceased to accrue, long associations so bound it up with the afflictions of the keeper's family, that they almost held their existence upon the tenure of its safe custody, and thus handed it down from generation to generation, till the stock at last became extinct, and the object of their former care passed into a keeping established by friendship instead of blood—thus obtaining publicity as well as security, whereas it might otherwise have continued comparatively unknown and unheeded, lost to the public, though possibly preserved to an individual.

The earliest mention of this reliquary which is to be found occurs in the Annals of Ulster at the year 552, in the following curious notice of a discovery made in that year:—"The reliques of St. Patrick brought by Columbkille to a shrine sixty years after his death. Three precious swearing reliques [that is, upon which oaths used to be administered], were found in the tomb, viz., the relique Coeach [or Vial], the Angel's Gospel, and the Bell called *Clog-indhechta*. The angel thus shewed to Columbkille how to divide these, viz., the Coeach to Down, the Bell to Armagh, and the Gospel to Columbkille himself; and it is called the Gospel of the Angel, because Columbkille received it at the Angel's hand."^g *Udhacht*, or the earlier form *Eadhacht*, is the Irish for *a will*; but whether the name "*Clog-an-Udhacht*," or "*Eadhacht*," had reference to this supposed disposition of the angel, or to some real occurrence upon which the legend was founded, or to some transaction in St. Patrick's life, is not easy to be determined. The ancient life of the saint, called the "Tripartite," indeed, relates that, having converted to the Christian faith the inhabitants of that part of the diocese of Armagh where the parish of Donaghmore is situate,^h he placed over them the Presbyter Columbus, to whom he left his Bell and Service-book.ⁱ But this word *left* denotes in the original the gift of an itinerant, rather than the bequest of a testator. After the account of the discovery, a long blank occurs in the history of this Bell, during which, however, we may presume that it acquired, as every century passed, more and more respect; for, at the year 1044, its desecration cost the inhabitants of the barony of Lower Dundalk in the present county of Louth, and of Cremorne in the county of Monaghan, an enormous penalty. The circumstance is thus related by the Four Masters:—"A predatory excursion was made by Niall, son of Maeleachlainn, lord of Aileach, into Ui-Meith,^k and Cnailgne;^l and he carried off twelve hundred cows, and led numbers into captivity, in revenge of the profanation of the *Clog-an-Eadhachta*. Another predatory excursion was made by Muirheartach Ua Neill into Mughdhorna,^m whence he carried a cattle-spoil and prisoners, in revenge of the profanation of the same Bell." The word of the original which is here translated *profanation* denotes the violation of an oath taken upon a relic, and refers to the act of perjury rather than to any real violence or injury offered to it.ⁿ

^f Colgan, *Acta Sanctorum*, pp. 11—13.

^g O'Connor, *Rerum Hibernicarum Scriptores*, vol. iv., p. 20.

^h Ordnance Survey of the county of Tyrone, sheet 46.

ⁱ Part II., cap. 142. *Trias Thaum.*, p. 148, *b*.

^k Now *Oneath*, in the parish of Carlingford.—Ordnance Survey of Louth, sheet 5.

^l Now *Cooly*, in the same parish.—Ordnance Survey of Louth, sheet 9.

^m Now *Cremorne*, in the county of Monaghan.

ⁿ See Professor O'Donovan's Note on the Annals of the Four Masters, A.D., 1223.

About sixty years after this occurrence measures were taken to secure from injury the Bell, which, by this time, was probably beginning to suffer from the effects of time, and the elaborate shrine, which is the principal subject of interest in the accompanying drawings, was made. This information is afforded by the inscription which runs along the edge of the silver frame that covers the back, as shown in Plate III. The subject is again lost sight of till 1356, at which year the Four Masters make mention of it incidentally in connexion with its custodee: "Solomon O'Mellan keeper of the Bell of the Will died, He was the general patron of the clergy of Ireland." It is to be observed, that the O'Mellans were an influential family in the diocese of Armagh, and, for many generations, filled the highest ecclesiastical offices. Though O'Maelchallain, or Mulholland, is named in the inscription as keeper, yet the other family, by means of their superior power, managed to convey to themselves a principal share in the office and emoluments of the keepership; and these they continued to enjoy for a considerable period; for, again, at 1425, they are introduced to notice by the same annalists in the same capacity: "O'Mellan, keeper of the Bell of Patrick's Will." Subsequently to this, John O'Mellan, the chieftain of his clan, obtained the office, conjointly with Patrick O'Mulchallyn;^o but, for some misdemeanor, he was deprived of his privileges by Archbishop Prene, and the sole custody of the Bell of St. Patrick^p was committed, in 1441, to O'Mulchallyn, the other keeper, who, by a second instrument, was appointed sequestrator of the profits, and was forbidden to allow to O'Mellan the least participation in either the custody or emoluments. These curious records are preserved among the archives of Armagh, in the original registry of Archbishop Prene,^q and have been printed in the "Ecclesiastical Antiquities of Down, Connor, and Dromore."^r

It is reasonable to conclude that, from this time forward, the family of O'Mulchallen continued in the undisturbed enjoyment of their ancient rights, for when the Bell, at the expiration of three centuries, was again made subject of record, it was in the possession of Bernard Mulholland, then resident at Moyagoll in the parish of Maghera, county of Derry.^s His son Edmund, who removed to Edenduffcarriek, and there held a subordinate post under the noble family of O'Neill, was its next possessor, and his son Henry closed the long line of generations down which this most interesting relic of antiquity and art had been conveyed through a period of seven hundred years. This Henry Mulholland was designed for the priesthood, and received a liberal education, but, failing to take holy orders, he opened a grammar-school in the village of Edenduffcarriek,^t where he laboured in his calling for several years towards the close of the last century. The late Adam McClean, Esq., of Belfast, was one of his scholars, and, in after-life, cherished a lively regard for his teacher, to whom he was able to perform offices of kindness, when years and infirmity reduced him to penury. As Mulholland had no children or near surviving relative, he felt the less hesitation in bequeathing to his friend his only treasure. Accordingly, when on his deathbed, he consigned to Mr. McClean the possession of the Bell, directing him to a spot where was found, buried at some depth in the ground, an oak box, in which, when opened, was presented to view the shrine, containing its precious deposit, and an old quarto volume, which proved to be a copy of Bedell's Irish Bible. On Mr. McClean's death, they passed to his family, in whose care they still continue in Belfast, and

^o There seems to have been some connexion between these two families, for a member of each is mentioned conjointly by the Four Masters, A.D. 1432.

^p It is called, in these records, "*Campana Sancti Patricii*," which agrees with the name "*St. Patrick's Bell*," by which it was known in the Mulholland family.

^q Folio III, *a*, *b*.

^r Pages 372—374.

^s On the title-page of the Irish Bible which accompanied the Bell is written, "*Ex libris Edmundi Mulhollan in comitatu Antrim, his Bible, Anno Dom. 1750.*" On a blank page at the end of Deuteronomy is written, in the same hand, "*My father, Bernard Mulhollan, died at Moyagoll, on Saturday the 17th day of June, 1758, by four o'clock in the morning, aged about 75 years.*"

^t Edenduffcarriek was the name of the townland where the ruins of Shane's Castle now stand. The village of the same name lay near it, but every vestige of it has been removed, and its site is not now distinguishable from the surrounding meadow.

through whose kindness the publishers have been enabled to present to the public the accompanying faithful delineations.

Plate I. represents the Bell itself. It is composed of two pieces of sheet iron, one of which forms the face, and, being turned over at the top, descends about one-third at the other side, where it meets the second piece. Both are bent at equal angles along the edge, to form the sides of the Bell, to which they contribute about equally. All the joinings are secured by rivets, and they appear to have been externally coated over with an alloy resembling brass. There is a rude handle at the top, formed of a small bar, bent in the middle, and unevenly attached at the ends. The following are the dimensions of the Bell :—

Height, 6 inches.
 Breadth at shoulder, $4\frac{3}{4}$ inches.
 Breadth at foot, 5 inches.
 Depth at top, $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch.
 Depth at bottom, $3\frac{7}{8}$ inches.
 Length of handle, 3 inches.
 Height of handle, $\frac{1}{2}$ inch.

It is very much corroded, and a hole has been eaten away in one of the sides.

The framework of the case is brass, which has been mended at the corners with copper, at a comparatively modern period. Upon this the ornamental parts are fastened down with rivets. The sides are quite plain, regularly expanding, however, from the top to the bottom. The top is surmounted with a curiously wrought appendage, which has been compared to a compressed mitre. The case is accompanied by a sliding plate of brass, which is received in grooves at the aperture of the base, and forms the floor upon which the Bell rests. Dr. Stuart, in his “Historical Memoirs of the History of Armagh,” has printed the following curious observations upon it : “On this plate, the lower edge or rim of the instrument has strongly impressed its form—a collateral presumption of the antiquity even of the cover, for the weight is not sufficient to have produced the effect, either by its pressure, or by any friction which it could have occasioned, except in a long period of time. It proves, also, that when the case was made, the Bell had an uneven base, as at present, for the indentations seem not to have been the effect of wearing, but of reiterated percussion.” “

Some parts of the ornamental work on the front have been removed, as its late owner, when first the article came into his possession, did not think it necessary to place it under lock and key, and his servants occasionally abstracted small portions as charms against diseases, and for other superstitious purposes. The dimensions of the case are as follows :—

Entire height, $10\frac{1}{2}$ inches.
 Height to square, $6\frac{1}{2}$ inches.
 Breadth at top of square, $4\frac{3}{4}$ inches.
 Breadth at foot, $5\frac{3}{4}$ inches.
 Depth at top of square, 2 inches.
 Depth at bottom, 4 inches.

Plate II. represents what may be called, for distinction's sake, the Front or Jewelled side. As it was in a more perfect state when Dr. Stuart examined it, we subjoin his description of its appearance.

Its top represents a compressed mitre, one side of which is adorned with a fine gold fillagreed work and silver gilt. The silver work is partly scrolled in *alto rilievo*, and partly in bass relief, resembling the knots in the collar of the order of St. Patrick. In the centre of the top is a blue stone, set in fine gold, and insphered in a glass bead. In its centre are four pearl-coloured stones, with four green ones of a smaller size, representing an intersected cross. Under this is a circular space, now vacant, which had probably been once occupied by a gem. One of the quadrangular sides, under the mitre, is formed into thirty-one compartments, by silver divisions. Nineteen of these are filled with various ornaments, in pure gold fillagreed, exhibiting the forms of serpents and snakes, curiously entwined. Two of the other compartments are now vacant. In two of the remaining ten are considerably projecting oval pieces of polished transparent rock crystal, or Irish diamond, each about one inch and a half in length, and set in silver. The setting of that which occupies the central compartment is silver, representing, on its edge, small *fleurs-de-lis*. Of the eight smaller divisions, one is occupied by an oval garnet, and three by oval carnelians; the remaining four have lost their ornaments."

Plate III. represents the back, and most interesting part, of the case. On this side the mitred top is of silver, which has been substantially gilt. The top is in bass relief, with scroll-work representing serpents; the remainder of it is divided into three compartments. In the central one of these appear two birds. The other two present the profile of a nondescript animal. The area of the quadrangular surface, under this side of the mitre, is covered with a substantial plate of silver, cut into thirty-two crosses." And it is in the margin of this, as may be seen in the drawing, that the inscription occurs, which adds such interest to the reliquary, and fixes its date with historical precision. Commencing at the left-hand angle of the upper margin, it proceeds to the right, then turning the corner, it runs down the edge on the right, then along the base from right to left, and then up the left side, till it reaches the corner from which it started. The following four lines represent the lettering in the order in which it occurs:—

ORDODOMNALLU LACHLAIND LASINDERN
ADINCLCSCAOCUSDODOMNALLCHOMARBA PHATRAICONDE
RNAOCUSDODCHATHALANUMAE LCHALLANDDOMAERINCH
LUICOCUSDONDUZIGUINMAINENCONAMACCAIBROCUMTUIG.

Printed in small letters, and divided into words, it is to be read thus —

"Op. do Domnall U Lachlainb laf i n-depnad in clóc ra, ocur do Domnall chomarba Phatraic
ico n-depnad, ocur do (d) Chathalan U Maelchalland do maep in chluic, ocur do Chondulig U In-
mainen co na maccaib po cumtuig."

Of which the following is the literal translation —

"A prayer for Domnell O'Lochlain, through whom this Bell [or Bell shrine] was made; and for Domnell, the successor of Patrick, with whom it was made; and for Calahan O'Mulhollan, the keeper of the Bell; and for Cudulig O'Inmainen, with his sons, who covered [it]."

Domnell O'Lochlain, or MacLochlain as he is called by the Four Masters, was Monarch of Ireland; he came to the throne in 1083, and died in 1121. The "Successor of Patrick" here spoken of was Domnell

¹ See Reeves' Ecclesiastical Antiquities of Down, Connor, and Dromore, pp. 369—375, where the inscription is treated of more in detail.

MacAmhlagadha, or MacAulay, who was Archbishop and Abbot of Armagh, and filled the see from 1091 to 1105. Consequently this shrine was executed in some year between the two last named dates. The other persons recorded in the inscription were of inferior rank, and we have no other record of them. The name Maelchallain, now changed to Mulholland, signifies "the servant of Challan;" and, with the prefix O, belonged to families which, at different periods, rose to distinction in the present counties of Derry and Meath. In Derry they were located in the barony of Loughinsholin; and, in Meath, they were the chiefs of Delvin-beg, now the barony of Demi-Foré.^w The townland Ballymulholland, in Magilligan, a parish of the former county, is a local memorial of the name.^x

Plates IV. and V. represent the sides of the case. "On one of these sides," writes Dr. Stuart, "which is beautified with stones, there are ornaments of fine gold, representing serpents, curiously and elegantly intertwined in most intricate folds, and in various knots, like the complicated involutions in the collar of the order of the Knights of St. Patrick. It may be worth remarking, that, on one of the ends, and below the knob and ring by which it is suspended, there are eight serpents, so singularly infolded and intermingled with one another, that it requires minute attention and considerable discrimination to trace each separately, and to distinguish it from its fellows. Their eyes are skilfully formed of blue glass. Above the cross are four of the same kind, and in each of the four compartments into which it is divided, there are two golden serpents in relief. Below the knob of suspension, on the opposite end or side, are six other serpents, with blue eyes, but differently intertwined. On the top is a strange representation of two of these creatures, with two legs."

Such are some of the details of this most interesting work of art, so creditable to the age and country in which it was executed, and so remarkable for having outlived, with comparatively little injury, a series of centuries which witnessed so many convulsions, both civil and ecclesiastical, in Ireland, and having escaped the hand of barbarism, which laid low the stoutest fabrics, and obliterated the fairest monuments of the land. It was made seventy years before the English set foot on the island, and, were it a solitary specimen of Irish art, would suffice to prove that, however deficient the natives may have been in the practice of warfare, they were not behind their neighbours in the cultivation of those arts which adorn peace.

^w Cambrensis Eversus, vol. i., p. 239. (Dublin, 1848.)

^x "Ordnance Survey," sheet I.



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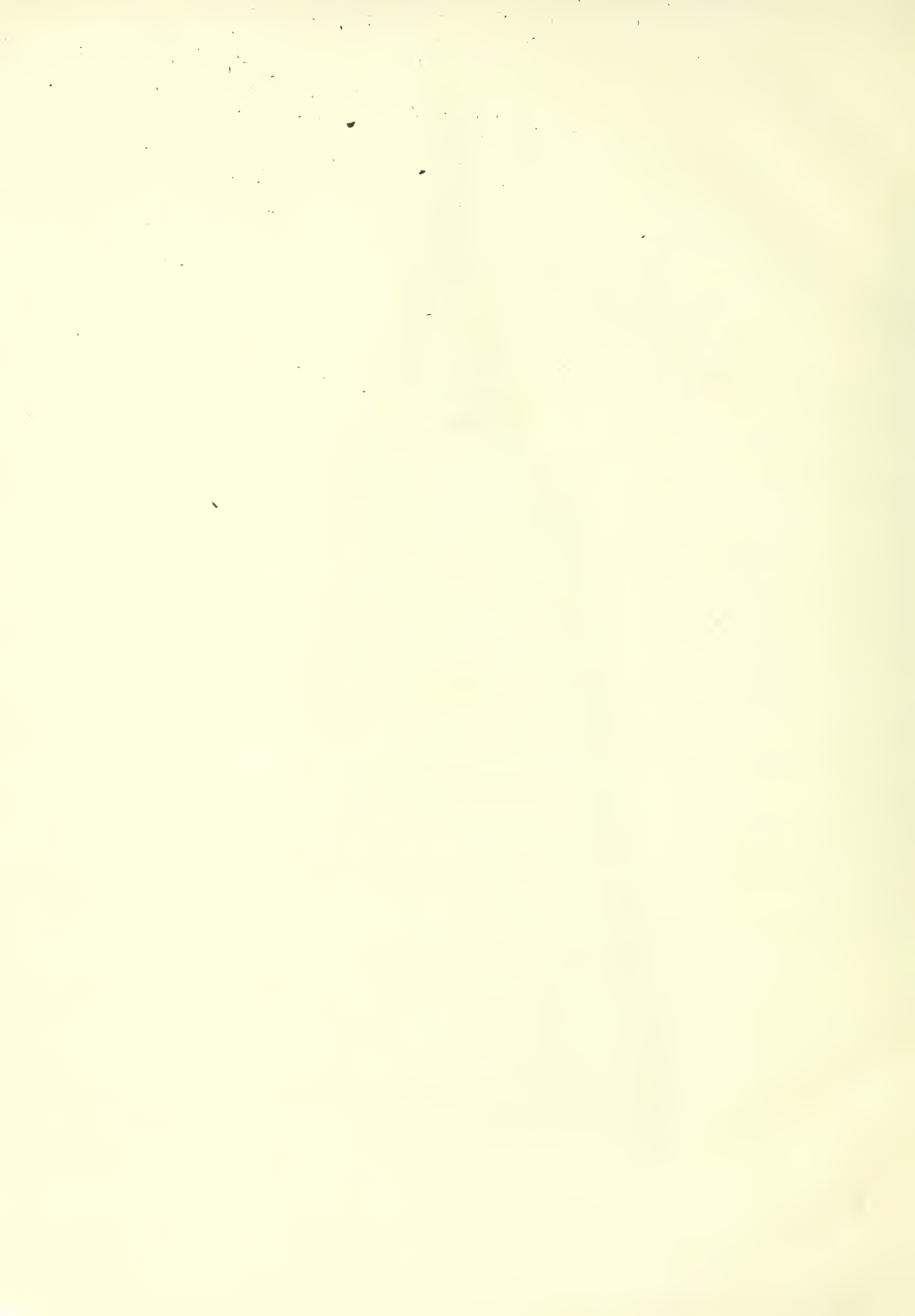
J. Murray Del.

FRONT VIEW OF THE SHRINE.



J. Murray Del.

RIGHT HAND SIDE VIEW OF THE STIRLING.





J. Murray Del.

LEFT HAND SIDE VIEW OF THE SHRINE.

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